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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 4-29 MAY 1992

Rapporteur: Mr. Luis ESPADA-PLATET (United States)

Addendum

CHAPTER V. COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

C. Asia and the Pacific
(continued)

Cambodia

1. The Assistant Administrator presented the note by the Administrator on assistance to Cambodia (DP/1992/56), which recommends approval by the Governing Council of the use of indicative planning figure (IPF) resources during the transition period (1992-1993) until a freely and fairly elected government is in place in Cambodia to formulate the country's reconstruction and development plans. This would then provide the framework for a regular country programme, which could be presented to the Governing Council in 1994. Pending the formulation and approval of the programme, the Administrator would approve all projects on a project-by-project basis.

2. This approval would involve the commitment, during the period up to 31 December 1993, of $40 million out of the total available IPF resources for Cambodia of $81.6 million. This is made up of the balance of unspent funds of $40.3 million from the third and fourth cycles plus the currently established fifth cycle IPF of $41.3 million.

3. It was recognized that Cambodia now stood on the threshold of considerable development opportunities following the establishment of the Supreme National Council (SNC) in September 1990 and of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and in view of the renewed international attention focused on the country. Many donors are making commitments, and the proposed Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia, to be co-hosted by the Government of Japan and UNDP in Tokyo in June 1992, should provide further expressions of commitment to the peace and rehabilitation process.

4. Three delegations spoke in support of the proposal. One delegation emphasized the need for substantial in-country training, and recourse to non-governmental agencies. It also stressed the need for effective coordination with donors, and for realistic estimates of requirements. The delegation also expressed the view that UNDP should not preempt eventual decisions that should rightfully be made by an elected government.

5. Another delegation emphasized the importance of rehabilitation efforts and the need for coordination so as to avoid duplication. A third delegation thanked UNDP for organizing a large number of fact-finding missions (para. 4 of DP/1992/56), for preparing comprehensive documentation on needs, and for the important role which the UNDP field office in Phnom Penh was playing. The same delegation expressed its country's desire to contribute to the rehabilitation process and to the work of UNTAC, and stressed the need for UNDP to strengthen its role in the areas of rehabilitation, reconstruction and coordination. Its country looked forward to working closely with UNDP in connection with the Ministerial Conference in Tokyo in June 1992.

6. In reply the Assistant Administrator agreed that donor coordination was crucial and challenging. He said that, pending the necessary institutional capacity-building, UNDP was helping the UNTAC Director of Rehabilitation by acting as the repository of data and a de facto secretariat. He also described the new major projects requested by the SNC in August 1991 to provide humanitarian, training, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance to all Cambodians. This was being undertaken through two projects totalling $12 million. One project provided, inter alia, for the return to Cambodia of former Soviet bilateral assistance teachers as UNV specialists.

7. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council authorize the Administrator to approve projects on a case-by-case basis for Cambodia.

Malaysia

8. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, presented the Malaysia country programme, which has a net IPF of $7.1 million and expected cost-sharing of $8.2 million. The programme would be concentrated on three areas: (a) human skills for the 1990s, (b) technology for the 1990s and (c) management of the environment in the 1990s.

9. It was noted that Malaysia had done exceptionally well in exploiting its natural and human resources and had attained a relatively high level of human development, with a human development index of 51 out of 160. It expected to enter the category of "newly industrialized countries" (NICs) within the next 10 years, and of "developed" countries by 2025. Thus the point to be considered related to the relevance and role of UNDP cooperation in such a context, particularly in view of the modest IPF.

10. The representative of Malaysia stated that national execution would be the preferred modality of execution, that training would be required so that the country would be able to meet its requirements, and that Malaysia was keenly interested in technical cooperation among developing countries as well as in the extension of technical cooperation to other countries.

11. Six delegations supported the country programme, and commended the Government for the results achieved in its overall economic management. One delegation asked whether UNDP intended to disseminate the positive lessons to be drawn from Malaysia's experience for the benefit of other countries.

12. The same delegation questioned UNDP's ability to deliver, given the large carry-over of cost-sharing from the fourth cycle, shown in the financial summary (annex I), and the apparently unrealistic coverage of virtually all themes, as shown in the programme matrix (annex II).

13. Another delegation, in considering Malaysia's economic status, asked what the role and impact of UNDP would be in the total development effort, what its added value would be, and what relationship existed between UNDP and other donors.

14. In reply, the Malaysian representative said that his country would be pleased to share its experience with other developing countries, and to discuss the most effective way of disseminating such information with UNDP.

15. With respect to delivery, the Assistant Administrator assured delegations that there had indeed been full delivery of the fourth cycle IPF, and that

cost-sharing resources had been carried over to the fifth cycle. He added that it was unlikely that a balance would be carried over into the sixth cycle, since the new programme was much more relevant to Malaysia's emerging priorities. He agreed that due attention should be given to the training of government staff in the modalities of national execution. He also highlighted the importance of a change in terminology, through the use of the term national management instead of national execution, in order to avoid creating confusion in the minds of Governments.

16. With respect to other donors, he said that, in view of the country's status, there were few traditional donors, and UNDP's role in assisting with coordination was thus relatively modest, although appreciated.

17. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Malaysia.

Myanmar

18. The Assistant Administrator introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to the Union of Myanmar (DP/1992/63), which requested the authorization of the Governing Council to approve assistance to Myanmar until further notice, on a project-by-project basis. Such approval would be guided by Council decision 90/34 and within the limits of the annual pro rata distribution of the indicative planning figure for Myanmar in the fifth programming cycle. The request was prompted by the current situation in the country and the absence of a national development plan.

19. Four delegations commented favourably on the Administrator's request. However, one delegation speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, and supported by one other delegation, recommended that any new project interventions should abide by certain parameters, namely that they should be targeted to the poor, for training, health and food security, for environmental protection, and for projects in the border areas, but only if the executing agency and United Nations staff could work with the population without restrictions and have free access to them. The delegation also requested that the assistance provided should be reported to the Governing Council on an annual basis.

20. Another delegation maintained a similar position, adding that only projects related to grass-roots development and the protection of the

environment should be approved, and that these should use the balance of $30 million which he had been led to understand was available from the fourth cycle.

21. In reply, the Assistant Administrator explained that the balance $30 million mentioned had in fact been committed to approved project budgets in 1992, 1993 and 1994 and had therefore not been spent during the fourth cycle. He agreed, however, to the Committee's request for annual project reporting, together with justifications of any new projects.

22. Four delegations expressed concern at the information they had just been given about the unavailability of the IPF balance from the fourth cycle. A final decision was therefore postponed until further clarification could be obtained, and consultations completed.

23. In the light of further discussions, the Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the draft decision contained in DP/1992/SCPM/L.11/Add.16.

Papua New Guinea

24. The Assistant Administrator informed the Standing Committee of the Administrator's approval of an extension of the fourth country programme for Papua New Guinea for one year, beginning 1 January 1992 (DP/CP/PNG/4/EXTENSION I).

25. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council take note of the Administrator's approval of the one-year extension of the fourth country programme for Papua New Guinea.

Republic of Korea

26. The Assistant Administrator informed the Standing Committee of the Administrator's approval of an extension of the fourth country programme for the Republic of Korea for one year, beginning 1 January 1992 (DP/CP/ROK/4/EXTENSION I)

27. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council take note of the Administrator's approval of the one-year extension of the fourth country programme for the Republic of Korea.

Thailand

28. The Regional Representative presented the fifth country programme for Thailand, which has a net IPF of $27.1 million. These resources will be

concentrated in three interlocking themes of human development: (a) income distribution and regional prosperity, (b) environment and natural resources management, and (c) human resources development.

29. In addition to the representative of the Thai Government, nine delegations spoke in favour of the country programme. The strategy of concentrating UNDP cooperation in five or six core programmes, thus reducing the large number of projects undertaken in the fourth cycle, was especially commended. Thailand's particular status as a country which has made substantial socio-economic progress over the past 20 years was also noted.

30. However, major problems had been identified, relating, for example, to HIV/AIDS and to the environment. One delegation expressed its satisfaction that these had been addressed in the country programme, and recommended that UNDP should play an appropriate coordinating role, particularly in the context of the WHO/UNDP Alliance Programme to Combat Aids.

31. The Assistant Administrator warmly thanked the Thai Government for its decision to increase its voluntary contribution to UNDP by approximately 10 per cent at the next Pledging Conference.

32. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Thailand.